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Violence against women in politics**

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 71/170.

* A/73/150.

** The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to reflect the most recent developments.

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Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on violence against women in politics

Summary

In the present report, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences analyses the issue of violence against women in politics, including in parliament and elections, and outlines her conclusion and recommendations on preventing and combating such manifestations of gender-based violence.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/170. In section II, she provides an overview of her mandate's initiative to develop institutional links and thematic cooperation between independent global and regional mechanisms on violence and discrimination against women. The activities carried out by the Special Rapporteur during the reporting period are included in her thematic report to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/38/47). In section III, she analyses violence against women in politics and the main challenges to addressing it. In section IV, she outlines her conclusion and recommendations on preventing and combating violence against women in politics.

II. Activities

2. During the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur continued to implement the mandate's initiative on strengthening institutional and thematic cooperation between independent global and regional mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights. From 12 to 23 March 2018, in New York, she participated in the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, where she launched a new initiative to develop institutional links and thematic cooperation between independent mechanisms with a view to improving the implementation of the existing international and regional legal and policy framework on combating violence against women.

3. In particular, on 13 March 2018, the Special Rapporteur convened a high-level panel on institutional cooperation between independent global and regional mechanisms dealing with violence and discrimination against women, with the participation of the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, a member of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Chair of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Chair of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe and the President of the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention,[1] as well as the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Director of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). On the same day, together with other independent global and regional mechanisms on women's rights, she also held a meeting with the Secretary-General, during which he reiterated his support for the mandate's initiative.

4. At the thirty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, held in June 2018, the Special Rapporteur presented her thematic report entitled "Online violence against women and girls" (A/HRC/38/47). In it, she analyses online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective and makes recommendations on how to prevent and combat it in the broader framework of human rights standards addressing structural discrimination and violence against women. She also presented her country visit reports on Australia (A/HRC/38/47/Add.1) and the Bahamas (A/HRC/38/47/Add.2).

[1] Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará) of 1994.

III. Violence against women in politics

A. Introduction

5. In the present report, the Special Rapporteur analyses violence against women in politics, its causes and consequences, and how it affects women's human rights and their participation in political and public life. The analysis reflects consultations with and information provided by various stakeholders and a range of national, regional and international organizations, following a call for submissions made at an expert group meeting on violence against women in politics, which was held on 8 and 9 March 2018 in New York.[2] The meeting was organized by UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Special Rapporteur, in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).[3]

6. In line with the mandate's initiative to strengthen cooperation and synergies between independent global and regional mechanisms dealing with women's rights, other entities represented at the meeting included: the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice; the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Council of Europe; and the Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention. Their representatives provided information on violence against women in politics from the perspective of their corresponding global and regional mandates within the framework of the implementation of their respective women's human rights instruments. Based on their input, the Special Rapporteur provides recommendations in the present report on how to prevent and combat violence against women in politics.

B. Manifestations of violence against women in politics in the world today

7. The equal participation of women and their access to positions of political leadership and decision-making at all levels are fundamental to achieving gender equality, as enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 2) of 1979 and reaffirmed in Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals. Globally, the degree of political participation by women has improved in the past decades. Millions of women now actively participate in public and political life as members of political parties, elected officials or civil servants. More than 10,000 women today serve as national parliamentarians.[4]

8. Women remain significantly underrepresented, however, at all levels of political decision-making. As at 1 January 2017, only 7.2 per cent of heads of State, 5.7 per cent of heads of government and 23.3 per cent of members of parliament were women.[5] To address the imbalance in terms of women's political participation,

[2] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, report of the expert group meeting on violence against women in politics (New York, 8–9 March 2018). Available at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/EGM_Report.pdf.

[3] Background information on violence against women in politics, including submissions made to the Special Rapporteur on the subject, is available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/ViolenceAgainstWomeninPolitics.asp.

[4] IPU, "Women in national parliaments: situation as of 1st June 2018". Available at http://ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm.

[5] IPU and UN-Women, "Women in politics: 2017". Available at http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/4/women-in-politics-2017-map.

numerous States have adopted temporary special measures, such as quotas and parity measures, in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

9. The underrepresentation of women in politics and public life, including in the institutions of all States and in representative positions at the international level (such as ambassadors and delegates in permanent missions) is caused and exacerbated by discrimination, harmful stereotypes and gender-based violence.[6] Violence against women in politics has, until recently, received little attention. Data on the subject are limited and their collection constitutes a challenge. Some studies, nonetheless, have revealed that such violence is widespread and systematic.[7] Others show that the violence targeting women who hold public office and political decision-making positions has a chilling impact on the political ambition of young women, with inter-generational consequences for the full realization of their political rights.

10. For the purposes of the present report, "women in politics" includes all women involved in political activities, those elected at the national or local levels, members and candidates of political parties, government and State officials at the local, national and international levels, civil servants, ministers, ambassadors and other positions in the diplomatic corps. Some women in politics may be more exposed to risks of gender-based violence than others, including: human rights defenders; young, indigenous, lesbian, bisexual and transgender and intersex activists; members of opposition or minority groups; and those voicing minority, dissenting or "controversial" views.

11. Men and women can both experience violence in politics. Such acts of violence against women, however, target them because of their gender and take gender-based forms, such as sexist threats or sexual harassment and violence. Their aim is to discourage women from being politically active and exercising their human rights and to influence, restrict or prevent the political participation of individual women and women as a group.[8]

12. Such violence, including in and beyond elections, consists of any act of gender-based violence, or threat of such acts, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering and is directed against a woman in politics because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately. This definition recalls the definitions of gender-based violence included in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (art. 1) and in general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women (para. 7) and general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

13. The aim of violence against women in politics is to preserve traditional gender roles and stereotypes and maintain structural and gender-based inequalities. It can take many forms, from misogynistic and sexist verbal attacks to the most commonplace acts of harassment and sexual harassment, much of it increasingly online, or even femicide. The murder in 2016 of Jo Cox, a member of Parliament in

[6] See the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 7 and 8) and general recommendations No. 5 (1988) on temporary special measures; No. 8 (1988) on the implementation of article 8 of the Convention; No. 23 (1997) on political and public life; and No. 25 (2004) on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention (temporary special measures) (para. 37) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

[7] IPU, "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", *Issues Brief* (Geneva, October 2016).

[8] NDI, *Not the Cost: Stopping Violence against Women in Politics* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, drew public attention as it demonstrated, tragically, that women continue to suffer gender-based oppression when engaging in public and political life. The killing in March 2018 of a prominent Afro-Brazilian human rights defender, Marielle Franco, in Brazil shows how the intersection of gender, race and participation in public life can imperil activist women. Another emblematic case was the assassination in 2016 of Honduran environmental activist Berta Cáceres, one of the many women environmental activists killed each year.[9]

14. In her report to the Human Rights Council on online violence against women (A/HRC/38/47), the Special Rapporteur highlighted that women in politics are regularly victims of online violence and violence facilitated by information and communications technology (ICT). They receive online threats, generally of a misogynistic nature and often sexualized. Ultimately, online violence against women in politics is a direct attack on the full participation by women in political and public life and their enjoyment of their human rights. The extent to which such online violence is used by State and non-State actors to spread disinformation aimed at discouraging women from participating in politics, swaying popular support away from politically-active women and influencing how men and women view particular issues has yet to be fully understood.

15. Violence against women in politics may be carried out by State and non-State actors, including members of political parties, fellow or opposition parliamentarians, voters, media representatives or religious leaders. It takes place primarily in public but can also occur in the private or domestic sphere. Perpetrators are not confined to political adversaries. In many cases, they can be women's peers, family members or friends trying to discourage them from being politically active. Under international human rights law, States not only bear direct responsibility for the acts or omissions carried out by its organs and agents but also have due diligence obligations to prevent, investigate and punish acts or omissions carried out by private persons and non-State actors.[10]

16. Violence against women in politics is often normalized and tolerated, especially in contexts where patriarchy is deeply embedded in society. Stereotypes associating men with interaction in the public sphere and women with the private, domestic sphere of family and home persist in most parts of the world today. Such norms include perceptions that a woman's role should be restricted to the private domain (home and caretaking), that politics is not relevant to the daily lives and needs of women and that women are incapable and ineffective leaders.

17. In addition, public awareness and actions to mitigate violence against women in politics are constrained by gender-based stereotypes often projected by the media, including social media. All forms of violence against women are generally underreported because of the culture of silence, stigma and impunity associated with gender-based violence.[11] In politics and elections, women may be more likely to conceal incidents of violence owing to the fear of appearing weak or unfit for the world of politics.

18. As a result, women in politics who fall victim to gender-based violence face multifaceted barriers to obtaining justice that go beyond their situation as women in politics, including re-victimization during the reporting and complaint process, resistance from law enforcement officials responsible for prosecuting perpetrators

[9] See Global Witness, *On Dangerous Ground* (London, 2016).

[10] UN-Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Preventing Violence against Women in Elections: A Programming Guide* (2017).

[11] Ibid., p. 19.

and inadequate legal protection or access to integrated services, all of which are features common to other forms of gender-based violence against women.

19. Frequently, reports of threats, harassment or other forms of gender-based violence are dismissed by the authorities, especially when there has been no physical harm. The gender-specific dimensions of the violence faced by women in politics are still strongly resisted and sometimes rejected. On occasion, the abuse, harassment and attacks are dismissed as a natural part of the cost of engaging in politics.[12] In reaction to such views, NDI launched its #NotTheCost campaign in 2016 to stop violence against women in politics.

20. Blaming the victims is a common feature of all forms of violence against women. Women victims of all forms of gender-based violence may be confronted with accusations of defamation, be marginalized or face the humiliation of not being taken seriously by the police. The consequences can be even harsher for women in politics who are publicly known. They may be viewed as politically disloyal, criticized for not "being up to the job" or seen as unreliable partners, all of which can have a devastating impact on their professional careers. As a result, many victims refrain from speaking publicly or reporting the violence to which they are subjected, thereby leaving the perpetrators unpunished.[13]

21. Data and standard indicators for measuring the incidence of violence against women in politics and during elections are lacking at all levels. Acts of such violence tend to be treated as isolated incidents rather than manifestations of widespread, structural discrimination against women in political and public life.

22. During the expert group meeting held in March 2018, the Special Rapporteur collected the testimony of women who became victims of violence owing to their political activity, which highlights the challenges.[14] A former member of parliament in Pakistan, for instance, recounted having survived several attacks and that she had been accused of sexual involvement with the Prime Minister and had received death threats because of her work on legislation regarding women in the workforce and acid attacks. A former minister in Peru told the Special Rapporteur that the threats she had faced had touched her whole family, including her daughter and grandchildren, and close collaborators, all of whom had attempted to dissuade her from remaining in politics. A former Swedish parliamentarian who was active in anti-racism campaigns described years of threats and harassment through letters, telephone calls, text messages and online abuse. She said that, when she reported the incidents, the police explained that the threats were something that she had to learn to live with as a public person appearing in the local media. She noted that, more recently, there had been several court cases and convictions for such harassment in Sweden, sending an important signal that the perpetrators of harassment could be found and convicted.[15] In France, in 2016, 17 female former ministers spoke out against sexual harassment in French politics.[16]

1. Violence against women in parliaments

23. On average, 23.8 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide are women.[17] That achievement, however, is still far below parity, as a result of the structural discrimination, gender-based violence and inequalities that women face.

[12] See Sandra Pepera, "Review of the Committee on Standards in Public Life into the intimidation of parliamentary candidates" (Washington, D.C., NDI, 2018).

[13] IPU, "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", p. 7.

[14] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures, Expert group meeting report, session 2.

[15] Ibid.

[16] UN-Women and UNDP, *Preventing Violence*, p. 40.

[17] IPU, "Women in national parliaments".

Traditionally, parliaments the world over have been composed of a majority of male representatives. Moreover, owing to the perception of power and immunity conferred by parliamentary status, which protects their freedom of expression, a culture of impunity for sexist remarks has prevailed among parliamentarians.

24. According to an IPU study, violence against women parliamentarians is a universal and systemic problem. The study, in which 55 women parliamentarians from 39 countries across five regions were surveyed, found that 81.8 per cent of them had experienced some form of psychological violence from members of the public and fellow parliamentarians; 44.4 per cent had received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction during their parliamentary terms; 65 per cent had been subjected to sexist remarks, primarily by male colleagues in parliament and from opposing parties as well as their own. More than 60 per cent of those who had been subjected to sexist behaviour or violence believed that those acts were intended to dissuade them and their female colleagues from continuing in politics and were motivated by the clear-cut positions adopted by women parliamentarians on such issues as human and women's rights. According to the respondents, aggravating factors for women parliamentarians included: being members of the opposition party; being young or members of a minority group; and working for women's rights, in countries marked by a general context of insecurity or hostility to such rights.[18]

25. In 2018, NDI conducted a survey of 64 female and 76 male members of political parties from four countries, in which 70 per cent of respondents, men and women, affirmed that violence occurred in their political parties. Political violence, according to 44 per cent of respondents, was more likely to be experienced by women than men, while only 4 per cent believed it was more likely to target men.[19]

26. Despite such alarming data, many parliaments have few or no internal mechanisms for combating sexual harassment. Of the 42 parliaments covered by its survey, IPU found that: 35.8 per cent of the parliaments surveyed had regulations and codes prohibiting insults, vulgar comments and unacceptable behaviour; 21.2 per cent had a policy on sexual harassment against members of parliament; and 28.3 per cent had a procedure for settling complaints. IPU also found that, although more than half of the women parliamentarians surveyed who had been subjected to violence (51.7 per cent) had reported the incidents to the respective parliamentary security service or the police, some recounted that the police had failed to follow up on their complaints or provide security.[20]

27. There are, however, examples of initiatives to address gender-based violence in parliament at the national level.

28. In Canada, the House of Commons operates a policy on preventing and addressing harassment. In additions, under its Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment between Members, all members are requested to contribute to a work environment free of sexual harassment by signing a pledge. Training sessions on the policy are also organized for members of Parliament and employees.

29. In France, a focal point in the National Assembly provides legal aid and psychological support to victims, who may also be referred to an ethics officer of the Assembly. Outreach efforts include the dissemination of information and material about the Criminal Code with regard to sexual harassment. Staff in the National

[18] IPU, "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians".

[19] NDI, *No Party to Violence: Analyzing Violence against Women in Political Parties* (Washington, D.C., 2018).

[20] IPU, "Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians", p. 7.

Assembly receive training on sexual harassment and sign a pledge to respect the Criminal Code.

30. In Switzerland, the federal parliament has been experimenting with an independent, specialized anti-mobbing and harassment body that parliamentarians can approach anonymously.

31. In the United States of America, the House of Representatives passed the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 Reform Act in February 2018. Under the bill, if enacted, members of Congress would be held accountable for misconduct and assistance would be provided to victims.

2. Violence against women in elections

32. The right of women to participate in public affairs, including by voting and standing for election, is an internationally recognized human right. It is important to consider genuine democratic elections within an international human rights framework using a human rights-based approach. Through participation in elections, women exercise their human rights to participate in political and public life, in particular their right to vote and to be eligible for positions in all public elected bodies on equal terms with men, in line with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 7). Since elections are a key moment in which power is established and voting rights are realized, violence against women in elections remains a major barrier to the realization by women of their right to participate in political and public life and constitutes a specific category of violence against women in politics.

33. Violence against women in an electoral context can include acts of gender-based violence relating to registration and voting, running for elections and political campaigning, the announcement of results and the formation of government.[21] The electoral violence faced by women differs from that experienced by men, given the gendered nature of the violations. Very often, the violence is sexual in nature and may also consist of threats to their personal security and that of their loved ones, social ostracism and attacks on their moral character and self-confidence. They are more likely than men to face sexual harassment in their own political parties and from family members or be demeaned in a sexualized way. For example, in Pakistan, the leaders of five major political parties signed formal agreements to declare that they would not allow women to file candidate nomination papers or cast their votes in elections, citing local traditions as their reason for doing so.[22]

34. In addition to the possible short and long-term psychological and physical consequences for victims and their families and communities, the most immediate impact of violence against women in elections can include fewer women contesting elections and aspiring to political office, fewer elected women, falls in voter turnout and, in some cases, the postponement of elections. Violence at polling stations and against electoral staff may also discourage women from engaging in the vital area of electoral administration, which in turn may lead to a further reduction in women voter turnout and diminish their comfort with the election process.

35. Regrettably, violence against women in elections has been only sporadically visible, owing to a lack of regular data collection on a national, regional or global scale, which is the result of largely gender-blind election monitoring standards and the lack of political will to address violence against women in elections.

[21] UN-Women and UNDP, *Preventing Violence*.

[22] UN-Women and UNDP, *Preventing Violence*, p. 3; South Asia Partnership International and International IDEA, *Women, Representation and Violence: Exploring the Constituent Assembly Election in Nepal* (2008).

36. Efforts have been made, however, to collect such data, including through the establishment of commissions of inquiry into post-election violence that have helped to highlight the pervasiveness of such gender-based violence against women. In Kenya, for example, the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, while investigating electoral violence, examined issues of sexual assault. In 2008, the Commission reported 900 cases of rape, gang rape, sexual mutilation and sodomy perpetrated against women between 2007 and 2008. It also reported that the perpetrators included security agents, organized gangs, individuals and known persons (neighbours, relatives and friends).[23]

37. According to the findings of one study, comparing more than 2,000 acts of election violence in six countries between 2006 and 2010 and containing data disaggregated by sex, women were victims in almost 40 per cent of all acts of election violence. However, the figure is presumed to be substantially higher, because data were not collected on the full range of forms of violence that women experience, including in the private sphere.[24]

38. Both election observation and violence monitoring programmes provide key opportunities for collecting information on violence against women in elections. By integrating gender dimensions and monitoring violence against women in elections during observation missions, data on violence against women in elections could be systematically collected and published in election reports.

39. Political parties are among the most common perpetrators of violence against women in politics[25] and discrimination by their members represents one of the biggest challenges to the participation by women in elections, given the threats and violence they face as candidates and when campaigning. Party leaders and members can address violence against women in elections by, for instance, expressing a commitment in the party's founding documents to eliminate such violence, publicly rejecting any form of such violence and instituting effective disciplinary procedures.

40. In 2017, UN-Women and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) published *Preventing Violence against Women in Elections: A Programming Guide*, in which experiences from more than 40 countries are analysed, actions needed for documenting, preventing and eliminating violence against women in elections are identified and the roles of the various actors who could be involved in implementing strategies are presented. In the guide, it is recommended that electoral management bodies could play an important role in addressing violence against women in elections by: mapping, monitoring and reporting violence against women in elections; analysing voter and candidate registration procedures to prevent barriers to women's participation; identifying measures for preventing and responding to violence perpetrated within political parties, particularly during the political campaign period; gathering information about violence against women in elections and the respective mitigation measures, which can be integrated into training programmes for electoral administrators and other election stakeholders.

41. Other organizations have also developed tools to combat violence against women in politics. NDI prepared an online incident report form to collect the testimonies of women political figures affected by violence and a votes-without-violence toolkit to help citizen observer groups around the world to monitor and mitigate electoral violence against women. IPU has carried out extensive work on the

[23] Kenya, Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (2008); Human Rights Watch, *"They Were Men in Uniform": Sexual Violence against Women and Girls in Kenya's 2017 Elections* (2017).

[24] Gabrielle Bardall, "Breaking the mold: understanding gender and electoral violence", *White Paper Series* (International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), 2011).

[25] Ibid.; UN-Women and UNDP, *Preventing Violence*, p. 36.

issue, including in relation to mapping and measuring violence against women in politics, focusing on the situation of women parliamentarians. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has developed tools to help document violence against women in politics and elections through quantitative and qualitative analysis and the use of ICT.[26] The foundation has also led the development of VAWE-Online, a globally adaptable tool to measure violence against women in politics in social media. Online spaces are the arena for many acts that violate the political rights of individuals or groups on the basis of their gender identity.[27] The tool (developed in cooperation with the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening and its Global Elections and Political Transitions subprogramme) uses sentiment analysis to identify and analyse patterns and trends of harassment and aggressive and abusive comments made to women active in civic and political life. Pilots were run in 2018 during local elections in Sir Lanka and general elections in Zimbabwe.[28] It is also being use in Ukraine. International IDEA has also produced a useful electoral risk management tool to collect data on violence against women in politics.[29]

C. International human rights law and independent mechanisms on violence against women

42. Violence against women in politics violates women's human right to live free from gender-based violence in political and public life and affects the realization of all other human rights, including the ability of elected women to represent their constituents effectively.

43. International human rights law explicitly addresses the right to the equal participation by women in political and public life in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 7) but not the specific issue of violence against women in politics. General standards prohibiting gender-based violence against women, however, are applicable, although not yet fully applied at the national level.

44. The right to participation in political and public life is guaranteed to all without distinction. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women of 1953 was the first instrument of international law under which the political rights of women were enshrined and protected. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966, equal and effective protection against any kind of discrimination in the enjoyment of rights and freedoms is guaranteed to all.

45. The right of all to freedom of opinion and expression and the right of peaceful assembly are enshrined in articles 19 and 21 of the Covenant. Article 25 guarantees the right to political participation, including the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, to vote and be elected and to have equal access to public service.

46. In the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women of 1993, reference is made to the equal protection of the right of women to enjoy all human

[26] IFES, Gabrielle Bardall, "Violence against women in politics: IFES submission to Dr Dubravka Šimonović, the OHCHR Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences" (31 May 2018). Available at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/IFES.pdf.

[27] See Jessica Huber and Lisa Kammerud, *Violence against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring and Response* (Arlington, Virginia: IFES, 2016).

[28] See IFES, *Violence against Women in Elections in Zimbabwe: An IFES Assessment* (Arlington, Virginia: 2018).

[29] See https://www.idea.int/data-tools/tools/electoral-risk-management-tool. Work is also being done at the national level, for instance by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights and the Federation of Women Lawyers in Kenya and the Women's Action Network in Sri Lanka.

rights and fundamental freedoms in the political field, among others (art. 3) and defines the scope of violence against women to include public and private life.

47. Under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, States are required to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that they enjoy, on equal terms with men, the right: to vote and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies; to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government; and to participate in associations (art. 7).

48. States are also required to take appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations (art. 8).

49. Under article 5 of the Convention, States should adopt measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices and customary and all other practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes and on stereotyped roles for men and women, in political and public life.

50. In its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on political and public life, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women calls on States to ensure that organizations such as political parties and trade unions do not discriminate against women and to identify and implement temporary special measures to ensure the equal representation of women in all fields covered by articles 7 and 8 of the Convention (paras. 42–43).

51. Under the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, States are further committed to ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life (Goal 5, target 5.5) and eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation (target 5.2). In addition, Goal 16 is aimed at ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7). The equal participation of women in public affairs is key to reaching that target.

52. The links between violence against women and their participation in politics are addressed in General Assembly resolution 66/130 of 2011 on women and political participation, in which the Assembly called for zero tolerance for violence against women elected officials and candidates for political office. That call was reaffirmed in 2016 by IPU in a resolution adopted at its 135th assembly on the freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference. In 2013, the report of the Secretary-General on measures taken and progress achieved in the promotion of women and political participation (A/68/184) included measures designed to prevent violence against women during elections or against women holding elected posts.

53. The Vice Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women confirmed at the expert group meeting held in March 2018 that violence against women in politics, which is not specifically mentioned either in the Convention or in the Committee's general recommendations No. 19 and No. 35, was not systematically addressed by the Committee. She recommended that States parties that were failing to address violence against women in politics should request the Committee to examine the issue during the reporting process and to undertake constructive dialogue with them. She observed that other mechanisms were available

under the Optional Protocol to the Convention, which allowed for individual petitions and inquiries into grave or systematic violations of the Convention.[30]

54. Since 2012, the issue has begun to receive attention in the Committee's concluding observations on the periodic reports of States parties.[31] For instance, in 2012, the Committee urged Togo to "implement without delay the recommendations of the report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission regarding the political violence, including violence against women" and to "ensure that those responsible for violations of the human rights of women during the pre-electoral period are brought to justice and that all acts of sexual violence are punished" (CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/6-7, para. 23 (g) and (h)). In 2016, it recommended that Honduras "take into account the IPU issues brief on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians, expedite the adoption of the bill on harassment and political violence towards women and enforce laws on gender equality and freedom from violence and discrimination against women in political and public life" (CEDAW/C/HND/CO/7-8, para. 27 (c)). In 2017, it expressed concern that in Italy (CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/7, paras. 31 and 32) "women in politics are often targets of sexist attacks and harassment because of their gender and face negative cultural attitudes and gender stereotypes within political parties and the media and among voters" and recommended that the State party "consider the adoption of specific legislation to combat political harassment and sexist attacks".

55. In 2013, the Working Group on the issue of discrimination in law and practice submitted a report to the Human Rights Council, in which it addressed the issue of eliminating discrimination against women in political and public life, with a focus on political transition (A/HRC/23/50). One member of the Working Group told the expert group committee that violence against women in politics was global, cross-cutting and relevant to the mandates of many organizations and mechanisms.[32]

56. Since the beginning of her tenure, the Special Rapporteur has made the issue of violence against women in politics a thematic priority of her mandate, affirming that women in politics are targets not only because of their political activism but by the very fact that they are women who are politically active.

57. Her call, contained in a previous report to the General Assembly (A/71/398), for the establishment of a "femicide watch" in all States to track gender-related killings of women in politics and as a tool of prevention entails the collection of information on and monitoring of such cases to determine how such killings might be prevented.

58. The Special Rapporteur's initiative to establish and strengthen cooperation between independent global and regional human rights mechanisms working on violence against women led to the organization of the expert group meeting on violence against women in politics in March 2018, in which all the independent mechanisms on women's rights took part. The meeting provided them with a unique opportunity to exchange practices and experience on addressing violence against women in politics under their respective mandates. The Special Rapporteur believes that, through strengthened cooperation between independent global and regional mechanisms, common synergies and efforts to address violence against women under the existing human rights normative framework will contribute to closing gaps in combating and preventing violence against women in politics worldwide (A/72/134).

[30] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures, Expert group meeting report, session 3.

[31] The issue has been addressed thus far in concluding observations concerning: the Bahamas (CEDAW/C/BHS/CO/1-5) in 2012; Togo (CEDAW/C/TGO/CO/6-7) in 2012; the Plurinational State of Bolivia (CEDAW/C/BOL/CO/5-6) in 2015; Honduras (CEDAW/C/HND/CO/7-8) in 2016; Costa Rica (CEDAW/C/CRI/CO/7) in 2017; and Italy (CEDAW/C/ITA/CO/7) in 2017.

[32] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures, Expert group meeting report, session 3.

59. The mandate has long worked in collaboration with civil society to raise awareness of the issue. Prompted by several emblematic femicide cases involving women in politics, which have been the subject of public statements by the mandate and communications addressed to States, the Special Rapporteur has encouraged all stakeholders to work with the mandate to provide data and information on cases of violence against women in politics. As part of its #NotTheCost campaign, NDI has created an incident report form to collect cases for transmission to the Special Rapporteur for her action through the communications procedure in order to deepen the awareness of Governments regarding the issue and highlight its global prevalence.[33]

60. The Special Rapporteur believes that the expert group meeting held in March 2018 marked the start of an enduring partnership between the United Nations system, international organizations, independent global and regional mechanisms dealing with violence against women and civil society organizations to tackle the problem of violence against women in politics worldwide.

D. Regional normative frameworks and independent mechanisms addressing violence against women in politics

61. In 2015, Committee of Experts of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention adopted the Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women. In the Declaration, which represents the first comprehensive regional instrument on violence against women in politics, political parties, political and social organizations and trade unions are called upon to create their own internal instruments and mechanisms to prevent, punish and eliminate violence against women in politics, and to conduct internal awareness-raising and training activities. Political harassment and violence against women are described as including "any action, conduct or omission, among others, based on their gender, individually or collectively, that has the purpose or result of undermining, annulling, impeding or restricting their political rights, violating the rights of women to a life free of violence and to participate in political and public affairs on an equal footing with men". It also affirms the commitment of the States parties to promote the adoption of regulations, programmes and measures for the protection against and prevention and eradication of political violence and harassment directed against women, allowing the proper punishment and reparation of such acts in administrative, criminal and electoral norms.

62. Subsequently, in 2016, the Committee adopted the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life, in which such violence is defined as "any action, conduct or omission carried out directly or through third parties that, based on gender, causes harm or suffering to a woman or to various women, which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of their political rights" (art. 3). The model law is intended as a tool for monitoring and curbing such violence and supporting the harmonization of national legislation with the Convention of Belém do Pará. It contains suggested protective guarantees and measures, such as restrictions on the aggressor's access to places the victim frequents; the assignment of bodyguards to women in situations of violence; risk analysis and safety plans; the withdrawal of violent campaigns; and the suspension of the aggressor's candidacy or election or their suspension from public office or employment (art. 37). Under the model law, reparation measures should guarantee the complete satisfaction of the victim's rights and those of their families and

[33] See also Isabel Torres García, *Violence against Women in Politics: Research on Political Parties in Honduras* (NDI, 2017).

communities and the non-repetition of the acts (art. 47). Measures of reparation include: compensation of the victim; immediate restitution to the office from which the victim was forced to resign on grounds of political violence; the determination of security and other measures to ensure the exercise of the position; and the retraction of offences against women victims of violence (art. 48).

63. The Committee of Experts intends to develop operational tools to protect women from violence in politics, including a model protocol for political parties, a guide for electoral courts and a workshop series on identifying violence against women in politics.[34]

64. The President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), at the expert group meeting held in March 2018, called attention to the role regional mechanisms can play in ensuring that States adhere to agreed principles and standards, even when ratification or implementation of regional treaties is patchy. She said that IACHR had adopted jurisdiction over countries which had not ratified the American Convention on Human Rights by applying the Convention's standards and principles. There was a need to better understand the interaction between free speech and violence against women in politics, an issue IACHR was committed to working on and on which States required guidelines.[35]

65. In Africa, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance together provide the framework for women's empowerment and gender equality, in recognition of the fact that that women's political participation is critical for the development of democracy in the region. The Chair of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights told the expert group meeting about constraints on women's political participation in Africa, including inhibiting electoral systems, poorly enforced quota laws, conservative backlash and harmful traditional practices, and noted the lack of data on violence against women in politics in the region.[36]

66. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), contains no specific provision on violence against women in politics. However, at the expert group meeting, the President of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence pointed out that the preamble and several articles in the Convention (arts. 3, 17, 33, 34 and 40) were relevant. It was concluded at the meeting that there was sufficient scope within international normative frameworks to cover violence against women in politics as a form of gender-based violence, although more could be done to issue specific provisions, protocols, guidelines or recommendations to guide States and survivors.[37]

E. Measures adopted and actions taken to address violence against women in politics at the national level

67. States have begun to address violence against women in politics by defining it in legislation and adopting corrective measures to end it. Legislation can be integrated into the broader legal framework addressing violence against women or may consist

[34] Once implemented, the model protocol will include a test to enable judges to more easily identify acts of violence against women in politics. The guide for electoral courts will include the same test and address such violence perpetrated by the State, intersectionality (in particular as it pertains to indigenous women) and freedom of expression.

[35] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures, Expert group meeting report, session 3.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

of stand-alone provisions to prevent violence against women in politics. Today, the Plurinational State of Bolivia is the only country in the world with a specific law criminalizing violence against women in politics (Law No. 243 of May 2012 on the harassment of and political violence against women). Elsewhere in Latin America, legislation is at various stages of development in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico and Peru.

68. Law No. 243 in the Plurinational State of Bolivia has focused much needed attention on the issue of violence against women in politics in that country and is viewed as pioneering legislation in this field. It is the result of efforts by women active in politics, including the Association of Women Councillors of Bolivia (ACOBOL), which documented incidents of violence against women in politics around the country. The legislation covers not only women elected and appointed to public positions but indeed women exercising any political or public role. It provides for mechanisms of prevention, monitoring and sanctions against individual or collective acts of harassment and political violence against women in order to guarantee the full exercise of their political rights. A national observatory for democratic parity has been set up to monitor gender and intercultural parity and the political rights of women and raise awareness and the visibility of a range of issues relating to women's political participation, including violence and generate data.[38]

69. In addition to legislative reforms, a range of other measures can be taken by different actors to tackle violence against women in politics, including: awareness-raising; data collection; the adoption of codes of conduct (in parliament and other bodies); training and capacity-building and media sensitization.

70. In Burkina Faso, a pre-electoral awareness campaign was implemented to combat all forms of violence in politics, including gender-based violence (A/68/184, para. 51).

71. In Guatemala, in the absence of a specific law on violence against women in politics, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, during the electoral campaign in 2015, issued Agreement No. 113-2015, by which it fined political parties for engaging in political and electoral propaganda that included sexist practices and the depiction of women as sexual objects, in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

72. In Kenya, violence against women in politics is tackled in several ways. The Elections Act No. 24 of 2011 contains provisions to ensure women's right to vote and facilitate the full and equal participation of women in political activities. Under the Electoral Offences Act of 2016, the use of violence, including sexual violence, during elections is prohibited. In addition, the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence recommended the establishment, under Kenyan law, of the office of rapporteur on sexual violence with the responsibility to highlight, on a continuous basis, the fact that sexual violence is a serious crime and needs an equally serious response on the part of law enforcement authorities.[39]

73. In 2016, a judicial protocol on violence against women in politics for use at the national level was approved in Mexico by the Federal Elections Tribunal, the authority of which is equal to that of the Constitutional Court and which has a mandate to protect political rights as human rights.[40] The protocol has been applied in more than 20 elections. The Tribunal recently approved a new protocol with strengthened

[38] UN-Women/OHCHR Special Procedures, Expert group meeting report, session 4.

[39] Kenya, Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (2008).

[40] See http://sitios.te.gob.mx/protocolo_mujeres/.

provisions on reparations and the coordination of authorities. In 2014, observatories were established to monitor and promote women's political participation at the national and local levels.[41] Some of them, including the national observatory, have working groups dedicated to the eradication of violence against women in politics. They disseminate updated information on the issue, promote a culture of reporting and coordinate actions to assist women in politics who fall victim to violence.[42]

74. In Pakistan, the National Commission on the Status of Women began collecting official data on violence against women in politics in 2015.[43]

75. In Tanzania, the Tanzania Women Cross-Party Platform monitored violence against women throughout the electoral process of 2015. Trained monitors were deployed to 14 regions and used targeted questionnaires to interview more than 1,500 respondents. They confirmed the incidence of physical, sexual and, above all, psychological violence against women, including abusive language, verbal harassment and insults aimed at demoralizing women candidates.[44]

76. International organizations have also taken action to prevent violence against women in politics. United Nations entities, including the Department for Political Affairs, UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN-Women have helped Member States to prevent violence against women in politics, including through training and capacity-building. In Madagascar, courses on gender equality, with a focus on the prevention of violence against women and women's political participation, were developed by various stakeholders supported by UNESCO (A/68/184, para. 52). UN-Women also supported national partners in their efforts to collect data on incidents of violence against women in elections and to train police and electoral security forces in Tanzania (2015), Haiti (2017) and Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe (2018).

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

77. **Violence against women in politics constitutes a serious violation of women's human rights and an obstacle to achieving gender equality, having an impact not only on the victims but on society as a whole.**

78. **Women's right to participate in political and public life, including in elections as voters or as candidates for elections, on equal terms with men, is explicitly protected under international human rights law, as enshrined in articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, but violence against women in politics is not specifically addressed through stand-alone provisions. Nonetheless, international human rights law on women's human rights and violence against women provides a strong framework for combating and preventing violence against women in politics that should be fully applied at the national level.**

79. **Violence against women in politics, as all forms of gender-based violence, constitutes a violation of human rights and is a form of discrimination against women prohibited under international human rights standards, under which States have due diligence obligations to prevent, investigate and punish acts of**

[41] See http://observatorio.inmujeres.gob.mx.

[42] Mexico, National Electoral Institute, "Convocatoria de presentaciones sobre violencia contra las mujeres en la política (31 May 2018). Available at https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/INE.pdf.

[43] See http://www.ncsw.gov.pk/news-events/ncsw-to-launch-standardised-indicators-on-vaw-to-collect-reliable-data-in-pakistan.

[44] UN-Women and UNDP, *Preventing Violence*, p. 59.

violence against women, whether they are perpetrated by State or non-State actors. States, therefore, have a duty to eradicate and prevent acts of violence against women in politics.

80. To do so effectively, it is essential to design, adopt and enforce general laws and policies combating and preventing violence against women, inclusive of political violence, and to guarantee the equal participation of women in political and public life, in compliance with international human rights law that covers all forms of gender-based violence against women and protects their right to equal political participation.

81. Given that violence against women in politics violates the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Maputo Protocol, the Convention of Belém do Pará and the Istanbul Convention, international and regional monitoring mechanisms can play a key role in providing guidance to States on combating and preventing such violence in line with their international and regional human rights commitments.

Recommendations

82. Urgent action needs to be taken, not only by States and their parliaments, but also by non-State actors, such as political parties and other stakeholders, international organizations and independent monitoring mechanisms on violence against women to prevent and combat gender-based violence against women in politics and elections.

83. The Special Rapporteur makes the following recommendations to States:

(a) Adopt and implement legislation prohibiting and criminalizing violence against women in politics or incorporate adequate provisions into existing laws on eliminating violence against women, consistent with international and regional human rights standards. That includes laws to prohibit sexism, harassment and other forms gender-based violence against women in politics, public life and parliament. Laws must be comprehensive enough to cover new forms of violence, including online or ICT-facilitated violence against women;

(b) Build the capacity of all State institutions, including parliaments and election bodies, to guarantee that women can work in security, free from gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and engage in transparent discussions about the prevention of violence against women, including by conducting surveys on prevalence and creating mechanisms for efficient complaints procedures;

(c) Strengthen the legislative basis for gender parity in all branches and at all levels of government to guarantee women's full participation in political and public life in compliance with international and regional human rights standards, applying, when necessary, temporary special measures, such as quotas and other measures, to accelerate progress towards the equal participation of women in political life;

(d) Strengthen complaint mechanisms and response protocols in line with international and regional standards by, for instance, issuing guidelines, codes of conduct and protocols for institutions like parliaments, electoral management bodies, political parties, electoral courts, legislative chambers or local administrations, and ensure enforcement mechanisms are functional;

(e) Collect and monitor data on violence against women, including on femicide, in politics nationally and analyse each case to design prevention strategies. Data collection and analysis may involve combining data on violence against women in politics with other indicators in national statistical monitoring or establishing dedicated monitoring bodies or observatories for the protection of women's rights;

(f) Establish access to justice mechanisms and reparation measures for women victims of violence in politics, including: compensation for victims; reinstatement for those who are forced to resign from public positions due to violence; adequate security measures to enable women office-holders to exercise their functions; and the formal retraction of offences or defamation levelled against women in politics;

(g) Ensure, in line with the obligation of due diligence and the principle that human rights protected offline are protected online, that regulations on Internet intermediaries are consistent with the international human rights framework and that all forms of ICT-facilitated violence against women in politics are criminalized and prosecuted;

(h) Encourage the media to promote public awareness and actions to mitigate gender-based stereotypes and violence against women in politics, develop media campaigns and increase the visibility of women's empowerment initiatives to tackle violence against women in politics;

(i) Ensure that sentences issued by the judiciary, including electoral justice bodies, on cases of violence against women in politics are made public and include a gender perspective in line with international standards;

(j) Strengthen efforts and build capacity to protect women who belong to categories that are particularly targeted by violence against women in politics;

(k) Train law enforcement officials, including members of the security services and judges, to raise their awareness of violence against women in politics and thereby ensure their ability to apply laws consistent with international human rights standards when investigating complaints and prosecuting perpetrators.

84. As the peak legislative institution of the State, national parliaments are encouraged to:

(a) Adopt new legislation or adapt existing legislation to protect women in politics against violence and use oversight powers to ensure its strict implementation;

(b) Adopt new codes of conduct and reporting mechanisms, or revise existing ones, stating clearly the zero tolerance of parliament for sexual harassment, intimidation and any other form of violence against women in politics;

(c) Conduct surveys and public debates periodically to raise awareness of the issue of violence against women in politics and the crucial role that male parliamentarians can play in preventing violence against women in politics;

(d) Address the impunity of members of parliament with regard to violence against women in politics and examine immunity rules that should not, by any means, protect the perpetrators of such violence.

85. As key interlocutors in the monitoring of the conduct of their members towards violence against women in politics and the gatekeepers to elected office, political parties are encouraged to:

(a) **Address violence against women in politics in the founding documents and codes of conduct of political parties, making public their rejection of any form of violence against women in politics and effectively sanctioning such violence perpetrated by members;**

(b) **Adopt internal regulations, codes of conduct and zero-tolerance policies for perpetrators of any form of violence against women in politics and elections, including sexual harassment and violence perpetrated through media releases and statements;**

(c) **Include male parliamentarians in efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women in politics and elections as advocates and agents of change for gender equality and women's rights.**

86. **As many incidents of violence against women in politics occur during electoral processes, electoral stakeholders are encouraged to:**

(a) **Electoral management bodies: monitor and report violence against women in elections, analyse voter and candidate registration procedures to prevent the erection of barriers to women's participation; ensure that voting arrangements guarantee women's safety in registration centres and polling stations; integrate information about violence against women in politics and elections and respective mitigation measures into training programmes for electoral administrators; and ensure that early warning systems for election violence and electoral security assessment address gender-based forms of violence;**

(b) **National and international election observation missions: include information in mission reports on the number or percentage of women who vote and are elected and quantitative and qualitative data on violence against women in politics and elections throughout electoral processes; and train election observers.**

87. **Given the key role that independent global and regional monitoring mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights can play in combating and preventing violence against women in politics by ensuring that States adhere to international and regional standards, they are encouraged to:**

(a) **Strengthen cooperation to tackle violence against women in politics around the world, based on existing mechanisms for addressing gender-based violence under the international human rights framework;**

(b) **Increase collaboration between special procedures of the Human Rights Council, in particular between the Office of the Special Rapporteur and regional mechanisms, such as through joint missions, and consider developing joint guidelines, public statements and press releases or communications about violence against women in politics at the national level;**

(c) **Strengthen monitoring roles to address the shortcomings of States in eliminating violence against women in politics. In particular, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should systematically integrate violence against women in politics into its reporting process and guidelines, which are being revised in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, while the Special Rapporteur and other mandate holders should use their communications procedures and those of the human rights treaty bodies, including that provided for under the Optional Protocol to the Convention on**

the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to address violence against women in politics;[45]

(d) Increase collaboration between special procedures, in particular the Office of the Special Rapporteur, and regional mechanisms, whether through joint missions, public statements and press releases or communications about violence against women in politics at the national level;

(e) Encourage women's human rights organizations and victims of violence against women in politics to file complaints with the Office of the Special Rapporteur, other special procedures and treaty bodies through their respective complaints procedures;

(f) Expand cooperation with election observation and human rights monitoring communities to conduct analysis of violence against women in elections, such as by sharing data-driven findings on violence against women in elections and encouraging formal submissions to the treaty-monitoring bodies and the universal periodic review process, using the communications procedures of human rights mechanisms and sharing reports with special procedures mandate holders;

(g) Cooperate with civil society organizations, such as IPU and NDI, and other stakeholders to prevent and combat violence against women in politics and eliminate gender discrimination.

88. The United Nations system and other international and regional organizations are encouraged to:

(a) Support and complement the efforts of Member States to prevent and combat violence against women in politics, including by developing standards for data collection and supporting monitoring initiatives over the entire election cycle, in cooperation with independent mechanisms on violence against women and women's rights;

(b) Raise awareness of violence against women in politics in United Nations offices and missions in order to ensure the implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which includes the participation of women in transitional political and peace processes.

89. All women in politics, whether at the national or international levels, are encouraged to tackle the culture of silence against gender-based violence and to speak up and report such violence to the appropriate national and international mechanisms, in order to hold the perpetrators accountable and advance system-wide changes on the path to achieving equality between women and men in political and public life and eradicating gender-based violence.[46]

[45] See also OHCHR and the Carter Center, *Human Rights and Election Standards: A Plan of Action* (2017).

[46] The Special Rapporteur joined other United Nations human rights experts to praise the global "Me Too" movement, which has shone the spotlight on sexual violence against women and gender inequality, and paid tribute to those who speak out and demand change, at an event to mark International Women's Day on 6 March 2018. Their joint statement is available at https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22759&LangID=E.